

Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Annual Activity Report: PY 2008-2009

Special points of interest:

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- **Comprehensive Planning, Zoning, Land Use and Flood Plain Management Activities, Page 3.**
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Year Marked by Federal Actions and Regional Activities

The Commission's efforts over the past year were largely driven by many of the same forces that affected our region and the nation at large. For example, the impact of the national economic downturn had several effects on the Commission.

The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as part of the Federal strategy to stimulate the economy, made available new resources for infrastructure improvements in the region. As Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation, Commission staff had to take on a range of new tasks to coordinate the use of these funds in the service area. In addition, the staff implemented a new system to let the smaller communities in the region know about opportunities



arising from additional Federal funding.

The downturn had other effects, most notably due to the implementation of the County's voluntary severance program which resulted in a 30% reduction in Commission staff as staff members took advantage of it and opted for early retirement.

Due to the strong efforts of the SSCRPC staff, a number of important initiatives still moved ahead. While several will be mentioned in this report, particular note needs

to be given to: our continuing work on the Sangamon County Regional Comprehensive Plan; new efforts to address environmental matters through the County's passage of an erosion control ordinance and our ongoing update of the natural areas inventory; and our efforts to increase transparency through improvements to our website and the implementation of a new regional indicators initiative.

This report represents just a summary of the Commission's work over the past 12 months; the 2008-2009 Program Year. We believe it demonstrates that the Commission continues to effectively and efficiently meet the charge it was given in 1957 to cooperatively address the planning needs of the region.

Commission Members: 2008-2009 (Official Representative as Noted)

Officers and Members of the Executive Policy Board:

Mr. Eric Hansen, Chairman, Citizen member.

Mr. Claudio Pecori, Vice Chairman, Citizen Member.

Mr. Larry Hamlin, Secretary, Citizen Member.

Hon. Tim Davlin, Mayor, City of Springfield. (Mr. Mike Farmer)

Hon. Andy Van Meter, Chairman, Sangamon Co. Board. (Mr. Brian McFadden)

Mr. Frank Squires, Chairman, Springfield Mass Transit District. (Ms. Linda Tisdale or Mr. Dick Austin).

Other Commission Members:

Hon. Sam Cahnman, Alderman, Springfield. (Mr. Joe Davis).

Mr. Dick Ciotti, Chairman, Springfield Metro Sanitary District. (Mr. Gregg Humphrey).

Ms. Erin Conley, Chair, Springfield School District 186. (Mr. Dave Smith).

Mr. Lawrence Eastep, Citizen Member.

Mr. Michael Galco, Citizen Member.

Hon. Andy Goleman, Member, Sangamon Co. Board. (Mr. Charlie Stratton).

Hon. Frank Lesko, Alderman, Springfield.

Hon. Tim Moore, Member, Sangamon Co. Board.

Ms. Leslie Sgro, President, Springfield Park District.

Mr. Kenneth Springs, Citizen Member.

Mr. Frank Vala, Chairman, Springfield Airport Authority. (Mr. Roger Blickensderfer).

Membership as of June 1, 2009.

Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Transportation Planning & SATS



Addressing the transportation needs of the public was one of the major goals of the Commission during the past year. As the recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area, the Commission provides staff support to the Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS) and is a voting member of the SATS Policy and Technical Committees.

During the past year the Commission staff facilitated the development of a method to prioritize projects that was used for the first time when American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for local road projects became available. Commission staff provided administrative support to process the selected projects and to ensure that openness

and transparency were maintained.

With the financial support of IDOT, Commission staff also oversaw the final development of a county-wide travel demand computer model that will assist in projecting traffic demands, identifying potential traffic issues related to new development, and predicting the effects of proposed road improvements. Commission staff as well as staff from other SATS members have already received training on the use and maintenance of the model.

The updating of the Long Range Transportation Plan began during the program year, and should be completed in March of 2010. One input for the Long Range Plan is

the Springfield Downtown Parking Survey, which was updated. The Public Participation Plan was also updated during this past year with substantial changes being recommended and adopted.

Work is also continuing on the updating of the City of Springfield's arterial roadway network plan, and the Commission is closely following Federal actions related to high speed rail service.

To encourage use of other modes of transportation, "Curb Your car on Bike to Work Day" (May 15) was established and promoted again this year as an effort to reinforce the link between good planning and public health, environmental impact, reduced energy use, transportation, and urban design.

Transit District Support and Planning



During the past year the Planning Commission staff continued to assist the Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD) by: providing data analysis; preparing a major update to the bus schedule; developing 32 supplemental service route brochures and two informational brochures; and providing planning support.

The Commission's Executive Director served on the Transit District's Comprehensive Operational Analysis Committee, helping

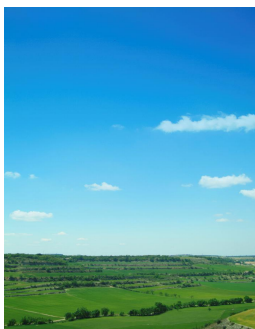
to review and select a consultant for a major assessment of the District's transit operations. This analysis is expected to become an important component for the planning of future route service,

Staff members also assisted the District by conducting an inventory of bus stops to help determine their accessibility. All bus stops were located by GPS coordinate, the characteristics of each location noted, and an assessment of their accessibility determined

so that those not accessible were identified. This information was important to the District's receiving a state grant to improve accessibility.

The development of a multimodal facility remains a high priority for both SMTD and the Commission. SSCRPC staff have assisted the District with this project and hope to continue to provide assistance as the project moves forward.

Rural Transportation Planning



While there are several goals to be met in local transportation planning, addressing the needs of special populations not currently served by public transportation is one of them. This can often be addressed through better coordination of existing transportation resources, effectively reducing the cost to both the public and the service providers. One of the populations considered to be most in need are those in rural

areas who find it difficult to obtain transportation into more urban areas where they can obtain access to the various services they need.

For this reason the Sangamon County Board established a committee to begin the process of developing a transportation plan for rural residents. During the program year Commission transportation staff began working with the committee to develop such a

plan. This work is being done in conjunction with Western Illinois University's Rural Transit Assistance Center, which is part of the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs. The project will be conducted in three phases, the first of which involves creation of a Transit Partnership Group. Commission staff believes that this work will build upon and be complementary to its on-going Human Services Transportation planning efforts.

2008-2009 Program Year

Comprehensive and Strategic Planning

During the past year Commission staff completed one community's new comprehensive plan (Sherman), began work on a plan for another community (Willamsville), and continued the development of a larger, regional plan.

The Sangamon Regional Plan is a major Commission initiative requiring the active involvement of municipalities in the region. At the time of this writing, 14 jurisdictions have passed resolutions of participation, and 4 have resolutions on the agenda for passage. The project is working through a Policy Committee made up of

representatives of the participating jurisdictions, as well as six Study Groups addressing: Environment and Natural Resources; Economic and Technology Development; Transportation and Public Infrastructure; Housing and Neighborhoods; Heritage, Recreational and Cultural Amenities; and Land Use and Development.

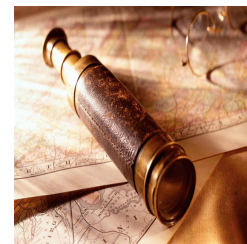
All but one of the Study Groups have been established (the Land Use Study Group will be established in a later phase) and four of the five remaining have already begun their work.

As the project goes forward the study groups will be holding a

number of community meetings to seek public input into the plan. An innovative project to seek the input from high school students is planned for the fall of 2009.

The Commission hopes to build upon this initiative in several ways, including the establishment of a best practices database for the region and providing community assessment and planning assistance to smaller, rural communities.

Unfortunately the future of this project may be limited by the failure of the State to provide Comprehensive Regional Planning Funds in the SFY 2010 budget.



Zoning and Tract Survey Review

Planning Commission staff review zoning petitions for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County, and the Executive Director also oversees the Sangamon County Department of Zoning and Building Safety, which not only addresses zoning in the County but also building permits and liquor licenses.

During the past year Commission staff provided professional staff reviews and opinions on 179 City of Springfield and Sangamon County zoning cases, an average of 15 each month. Even with the economic downturn, this repre-

sented an increase over the previous year. Staff must review the petition, identify surrounding uses and determine if the requirements of the ordinances are met.

As part of this work the Commission also began a new series of informational planning policy bulletins addressing how the staff approaches zoning cases and provides interpretation of specific zoning issues.

Related to land use, the Executive Director of the SSCRPC also serves as the County Plat Officer and reviews tract surveys for approval. Each of the 169 tract sur-

veys submitted this past year were reviewed to ensure compliance with the Illinois State Plat Act, Springfield and Sangamon County zoning ordinances, and survey requirements. This also represents an increase over the previous year.

It is important to note that due to the retirement of the County Zoning Administrator, the Commission's Environmental and Land Use Planning staff had to take on additional work that would otherwise have been done by the Zoning Administrator.



Floodplain Management

The Commission acts as Floodplain Administrator for Sangamon County and Springfield. On a weekly basis the Commission handles numerous requests from property owners, insurance agents and mortgage lenders who inquire if a property is within a floodplain. As part of this work the staff must also review and issue Floodplain Development Permits for property owners seeking to alter the topography of land within the

floodplain. Only two were approved this year, which the Commission considers an indicator of floodplain management success.

Sangamon County residents who own property in or near a floodplain benefit from participation in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System (CRS) program, which is administered locally by Commission staff. This program results in lower insurance premiums under

the National Flood Insurance Program based on the community's CRS class rating.

Maintaining the class rating requires various communication and outreach activities to be completed by SSCRPC staff on an annual basis. In the Fall of 2008, over 3000 letters were mailed to property owners to inform them that all or part of their property was within a floodplain.



Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

In addition to the other items mentioned, during the year Commission staff provided such assistance as:

- Helping various agencies and organizations with their mapping requests.
- Continuing coordination and management of the regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Assisting in the drafting of a new state transportation planning and accountability act.
- Developing a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for certification by the US Economic Development Administration.
- Advising two communities on the development of zoning ordinances.
- Updating the Sangamon County Natural Areas Inventory.
- Development of the County's erosion control ordinance.
- Conducted the first local "Planning College" for local residents and municipal leaders.
- Provided a seminar on zoning law for local municipal officials.

Census Planning & Analysis

Good local and regional planning requires that the Commission continue its work to maintain an accurate assessment of population growth in the region so as to better address the public's needs.

This population assessment drives much of the work of the Commission, influencing strategic and comprehensive, transportation, economic, and environmental planning. Throughout the year Commission staff are called upon to do population estimates and analyze census data. Over 34 special data analyses and reports were conducted this program year.

While the official US Census is still a year away, Commission staff are already at work preparing for it. The staff has already assisted in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) project, and the 2010 Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP). The PSAP will allow designated participants, following Census Bureau guidelines, to review and suggest modifications to the boundaries of block groups, census tracts, census county divisions, and census designated places.

Since the census takes into account municipal jurisdictions, it is

also important that the Census Bureau have accurate jurisdictional boundaries. Staff was involved in the Census Boundary and Annexation Survey, updating municipal boundaries for the City of Springfield.

The staff is currently coordinating the local Complete Count Committee to help ensure participation in the census. Since many Federal and State assistance programs are tied to final census figures, a complete count is vitally important.

Commission staff also assisted in outreach activities for the 2009 Census of Businesses.

Development Planning & Review

A large part of the Commission's efforts center around the analysis and review of development projects in Springfield and unincorporated Sangamon County. The Commission's responsibilities are spelled out by local ordinances relating to land subdivision or large scale development, and largely done through the work of the staff and the Commission's Land Subdivision Committee.

As of June 4, 2009, the Commission's Land Subdivision Commit-

tee reviewed 44 development projects and 2 street name changes. This was a decline of 14 development projects over the previous year, but still represented an average of four reviews each month.

One of the significant efforts of the staff this past year was its continuing assistance to a committee of the Quantum 5 Partnership in reviewing and updating the Springfield Land Subdivision Ordinance. This committee has been

working for almost two years to update and streamline development regulations.

The SSCRPC Executive Director also serves on a committee considering a road impact fee ordinance and program for Springfield. To assist with this initiative the Commission conducted data analysis and development projections for the committee, and also developed an alternative program structure for discussion and consideration.

Outreach & Education

Among the efforts that the Commission believes vitally important is the education of the public concerning planning issues that affect them. Many of these activities are described in other portions of this report, but three new efforts begun during this program year require special mention.

Planning for the **Development Review Tracking System** (DRTS) began this year to address problems raised by the development community and public. When completed this system will provide developers and the public

with on-line access to information concerning land subdivision and zoning cases as well as their status in the review process. It would allow the public to not only know the location of projects, but actually see the plans that are under review.

To better help identify and track factors affecting regional growth and development, the Commission began work on **SangStat**, a public database of indicators of regional growth. The SangStat database is intended to track important "foundation" indicators that

may be considered inputs to growth, as well as "performance" indicators that address the outputs of development planning efforts.

The Commission will shortly bring on-line its new website at **SSCRPC.com**, which will provide additional planning and development information to the public. Information that was previously only available in printed form, or only available by visiting the Commission's offices, will now be available to anyone with access to the internet.

2008-2009 Program Year

Development & Redevelopment Planning

Many of the activities of the Commission directly affect development and redevelopment, but we are often asked by communities, areas and even neighborhoods to help them plan for economic development.

Due to limited staff capacity we have not been able to provide this assistance, but the Commission has been interested in expanding its services to include planning for the redevelopment of struggling, older commercial corridors. One of the most exciting initiatives that the Commission has undertaken began this year thanks to the efforts of Congressman John Shimkus.

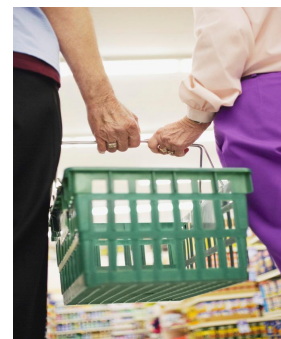
In April of 2009 we were informed that due to the Congressman's support, the Commission had been awarded a \$95,000 grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to conduct a redevelopment planning project for the MacArthur Blvd. corridor.

The study will consider a corridor in and around MacArthur from South Grand Ave. to the new I-72 interchange, but its primary focus will be on redeveloping the segment from South Grand to Wabash.

The study is expected to take 7-9

months and involve four phases: data collection and inventory of the area to determine the final target and land use issues; a strategic analysis to address market presence, development barriers and design and identity components; a cost and implementation analysis; and an action plan.

The Commission does not plan to do this work internally, but to seek an external consultant. Even so, it will provide a template for future Commission initiated and conducted corridor planning studies.



FINANCES: Receipts and Disbursements, December 1, 2007 through November 30, 2008. Does not include Sangamon County Department of Zoning and Building Safety.

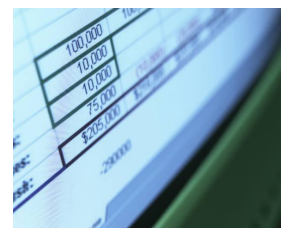
RECEIPTS:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$38,164.00 |
| Sangamon County | |
| General Planning | 142,080.00 |
| Boards & Committees | 6,700.00 |
| Cost Allocation | 201,220.00 |
| City of Springfield | 161,835.44 |
| Springfield Area Transportation Study | |
| State of Illinois (FHWA) | 254,146.92 |
| Sangamon County | 18,035.77 |
| City of Springfield | 18,035.77 |
| Village of Chatham | 5,922.83 |
| Mass Transit Study | |
| State of Illinois (FTA) | 75,459.42 |
| Spfld Mass Transit District | 18,864.85 |
| Marketing Materials (Work Task #314) | |
| Spfld Mass Transit District | 14,033.32 |
| Hazard Mitigation Grant (IEMA) | 37,052.52 |
| Regional Comp. Plan. Fund (St. IL) | 219,600.09 |
| Local Crash Data Collection (St. IL) | 10,000.00 |
| Springfield Park District | 1,500.00 |
| Western Illinois Regional Council | 2,500.00 |
| Village of Sherman Comp. Plan | 3,630.92 |
| Travel Demand Model | |
| IDOT | 38,349.59 |
| IDOT Dist. 6 | 2,159.31 |
| Interest Earned | 1,392.14 |
| Reimbursed Expenses | <u>783.95</u> |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | \$1,271,466.84 |

DISBURSEMENTS:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Personnel | \$576,830.09 |
| Part-time Personnel | 00.00 |
| Boards & Committees | 6,700.00 |
| Overtime | 00.00 |
| Fringe Benefits | 181,826.66 |
| Office Supplies | 2,553.85 |
| Printing | 1,113.58 |
| Exempt Printing | 2,823.93 |
| Meetings & Dues | 4,962.50 |
| Travel & Mileage | 2,108.74 |
| Equipment Maintenance | 1,099.00 |
| Publications | 2,711.68 |
| Postage | 3,962.52 |
| Contractual Services (Regular) | 5,606.25 |
| Contractual Services (Grant) | 54,646.10 |
| New Equipment | 7,885.39 |
| Cost Allocation | <u>201,220.00</u> |
| TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS | \$1,056,050.29 |

As per audit review conducted by Cameron, Smith & Company





About the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC)

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Visit us on the web at:

www.sscrpc.com

The SSCRPC serves as the joint planning body for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield. The Planning Commission also works with other public and semi-public agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and assists other Sangamon County communities with their planning needs.

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and 6 appointed citizens from the city and county. The Executive Director is appointed by the Executive Board of the Commission.

The Planning Commission, through its professional staff, provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economics, environment, and special projects. It also houses the Sangamon County Department of Zoning and Building Safety which oversees zoning, building permits and code, and liquor licensing for the County.

The Commission prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the County, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with planning activities. The staff reviews all proposed subdivisions and makes recommendations on all Springfield and Sangamon County zoning and variance requests. The agency serves as the Floodplain Administrator, Census coordinator, and local A-95 review clearinghouse to process and review all federally funded applications for the county. The agency also maintains existing base maps, census tract maps, township and zoning maps and the road name map for the county.

The Planning Commission's Executive Director is also the Plats Officer for Sangamon County. Divisions of land must be reviewed by the Plats Officer to insure compliance with the State Plat Act and local zoning and subdivision regulations.

Administrative Staff

Norm Sims, Executive Director

Mary Jane Niemann, Account Technician and Operations Assistant

Chris Benson, Intern, Univ. of Illinois at Springfield

Daniel Walker, Intern, Ball State Univ.

Planning Staff

Linda Wheeland, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning

Dale Schultz, Associate Planner, Transportation Planning

Joe Zeibert, Senior Planner, Development Planning

Molly Berns, Senior Planner, Land Use Planning

Abby Johnson, Associate Planner, Land Use Planning

Jeff Fulgenzi, Principal Planner, Comprehensive & Strategic Planning

Zoning & Building Safety Staff

Mike Ashenfelter, Code Enforcement Officer.

Leonard LeVeque, Code Enforcement Officer.

Mike Smith, Code Enforcement Officer.

Brian Schackmann, Liquor Code Enforcement Officer.

Cyndi Knowles, Zoning Inspector.

Jane Lewis, Clerk-Typist II.

Jeanne Melton, Clerk-Typist II.

Susan Taylor, Clerk-Typist.

Staff Retirements During the Program Year

Susan Poludniak, Assistant Director

Randy Armstrong, Zoning Administrator.

Mark Jones, Principal Planner, Mapping & Data

Shirley Blankenship, Clerk

Primary Committees & Formal Linkages

Sangamon County: Public Health, Safety and Zoning Committee; Land Use Advisory Board; Historic Preservation Commission; Zoning Board of Appeals; Rural Transportation Committee; Local Emergency Planning Committee; Aerial Flyover Committee, .

City of Springfield: Historic Sites Commission; Planning and Zoning Commission; Road Impact Fee Advisory Committee; Springfield Green; Lincoln Bicentennial Committee.

SSCRPC: Land Subdivision Committee; Springfield Area Transportation Study.

State: Region 7 Regional Transportation Committee; Illinois Greenways and Trails Council; Illinois Association of Regional Councils; Illinois MPO Advisory Council; UIS Public Affairs Planning Group; APA Illinois.

Other: SMTD Disabled Persons Advisory Committee; Downtown Springfield Inc.; Route 66 Trail Executive Council; Illinois Greenways and Trails Council, Economic Development Council of Springfield & Sangamon County; Quantum 5 Partnership; Illinois Medical District at Springfield.

